

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) Neutral electrode for high frequency (HF) surgery, comprising at least one electrically conductive section for contacting a portion of a patient's body and comprising a temperature independent circulation-promoting means adapted to enhance blood flow, without regard to the temperature, at least through the portion of the patient's body in contact with said at least one electrically conductive section.
2. (Previously Presented) Neutral electrode according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one electrically conductive section is coated with a conductive gel to improve the contact between said section and said portion of the patient's body.
3. (Original) Neutral electrode according to Claim 1, wherein said circulation-promoting means comprises a substance that contains a circulation-promoting agent.
4. (Previously Presented) Neutral electrode according to Claim 3, wherein said at least one conductive section is coated with said substance that contains said circulation-promoting agent.
5. (Original) Neutral electrode according to Claim 2, wherein said gel incorporates a substance that contains a circulation-promoting agent.
6. (Withdrawn) Neutral electrode according to Claim 1, wherein a carrier material adapted to hold said conductive section incorporates a substance that contains a circulation-promoting agent.
7. (Withdrawn) Neutral electrode according to Claim 1, wherein said circulation-promoting means comprise elements that supply a stimulus current.

8. (Withdrawn) Neutral electrode according to Claim 7, comprising a plurality of said electrically conductive sections and wherein said elements that supply said stimulus current are disposed such that said stimulus current flows between at least two of said sections within the neutral electrode.

9. (Withdrawn) Neutral electrode according to Claim 7, wherein said elements that supply the stimulus current comprise separate electrical connector devices for connection to a current source.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Withdrawn) Neutral electrode according to Claim 1, wherein said circulation-promoting means comprises elements that are heated by a direct supply of energy.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A neutral electrode for use in high frequency (HF) surgery, comprising:

at least one electrically conductive section for contacting a patient's body, wherein the at least one electrically conductive section is coated with a gel containing a circulation promoting agent as a circulation promoting means adapted to enhance blood flow at least through said body portion in contact with said at least one electrically conductive section to reduce a contact resistance between said conductive section and said body portion.

14. (Previously Presented) The neutral electrode according to claim 13, wherein the circulation promoting agent is capsaicin.

15. (Previously Presented) Neutral electrode according to claim 5, wherein the circulation promoting agent is capsaicin.

16. (Previously Presented) A neutral electrode for use in high frequency (HF) surgery, comprising:

at least one electrically conductive section for contacting a patient's body, wherein said section is coated with a conductive gel to improve the contact between said section and said portion of the patient's body and wherein said gel incorporates a substance that contains a circulation promoting agent as a circulation promoting means adapted to enhance blood flow at least through said body portion in contact with said at least one electrically conductive section.

17. (Currently Amended) Neutral electrode for high frequency (HF) surgery, comprising at least one electrically conductive section for contacting a portion of a patient's body and comprising a circulation-promoting means adapted to enhance blood flow, without regard to the temperature, at least through the portion of the patient's body in contact with said at least one electrically conductive section, wherein said circulation-promoting means comprises a substance that contains a circulation-promoting agent.